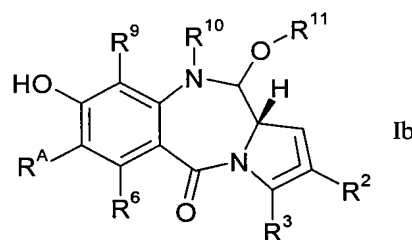
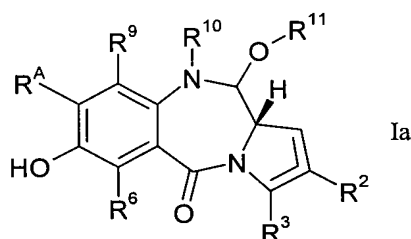


Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib**:



and salts, solvates, and chemically protected forms thereof, wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R² and R³ are independently selected from -H, =O, =CH₂, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, O-SO₂-R, CO₂R and COR;

R⁶ and R⁹ are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me₃Sn and halo;

where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C₁₋₁₂ alkyl, C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl and C₅₋₂₀ aryl groups;

R^A is selected from H, R, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me₃Sn and halo;

R¹⁰ is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group; and

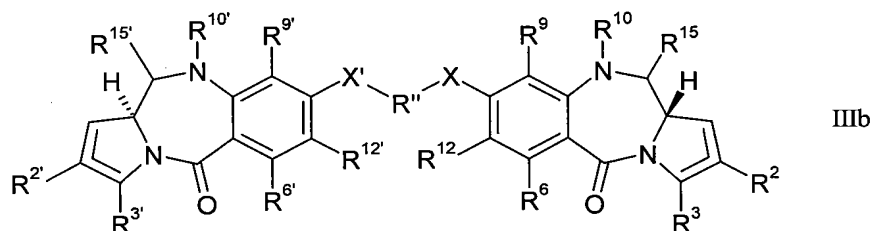
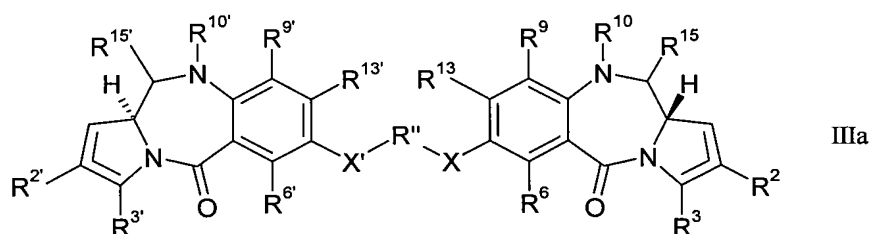
R¹¹ is an oxygen protecting group.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^A is independently selected from H, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR' and halo.

3. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~either claim 1 or claim 2~~, wherein R¹¹ is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.

4. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1~~, wherein R¹⁰ is BOC or Troc.

5. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1~~, wherein R^9 is H.
6. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1~~, wherein R^2 is R.
7. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any of the preceding claims 1~~, wherein R^6 is selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2 , nitro and halo.
8. (Original) A compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**:



and salts and thereof, wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R^2 and R^3 are independently selected from $-H$, $=O$, $=CH_2$, $-CN$, $-R$, OR, halo, $=CH-R$, $O-SO_2-R$, CO_2R and COR;

R^6 , R^9 , R^{12} and R^{13} are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2 , NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group and R^{15} is either $O-R^{11}$, wherein R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group, or OH, or R^{10} and R^{15} together form a double bond between N10 and C11; and

where R" is a C₃₋₁₂ alkylene group, which chain may be interrupted by one or more heteroatoms, e.g. O, S, NH, and/or aromatic rings, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or NH; and R^{2'}, R^{3'}, R^{6'}, R^{9'}, R^{10'}, R^{12'}, R^{13'} and R^{15'} are all independently selected from the same lists as previously defined for R², R³, R⁶, R⁹, R¹⁰, R¹², R¹³ and R¹⁵ respectively.

9. (Original) A compound according to claim 8, wherein the dimers are linked at the C8 position.
10. (Original) A compound according to claim 8, wherein the dimers are linked at the C7 position.
11. (Original) A compound according to either claim 9 or claim 10, wherein -X'-R"-X- of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb** is -O-(CH₂)_n-O-, where n is 3 to 12.
12. (Original) A compound according to claim 11, wherein n is 8 to 12.
13. (Original) A compound according to claim 12, wherein n is 8 to 11.
14. (Original) A compound according to claim 13, wherein n is 8 to 10.
15. (Original) A compound according to claim 14, wherein n is 8 or 9.
16. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 15~~, wherein R¹⁵ is O-R¹¹ and R¹¹ is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.
17. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 16~~, wherein R¹⁰ is BOC or Troc.
18. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 15~~, wherein R¹⁰ and R¹⁵ together form a double bond between N10 and C11.
19. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 18~~, wherein R⁹ is H.

20. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 19~~, wherein R^2 is R.

21. (Currently Amended) A compound according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 20~~, wherein R^6 is selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2 , nitro and halo.

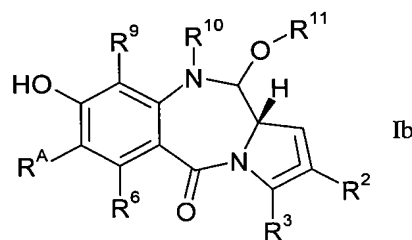
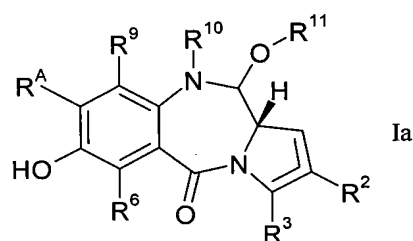
22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition containing a compound of ~~any one of claims 8 to 24~~, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

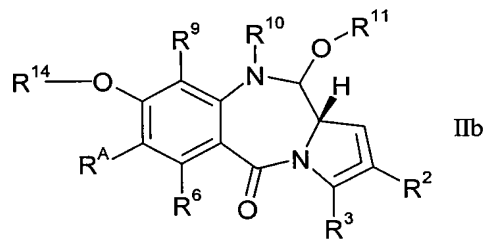
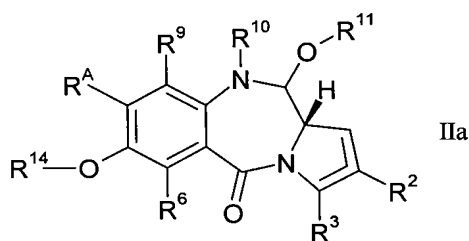
24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of treatment of a proliferative disease, comprising administering to a subject in need of treatment a therapeutically-effective amount of a compound of ~~any one of claims 8 to 24~~.

26. (Original) A method of synthesising a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib**:



from a compound of formula **IIa** or **IIb** respectively:



wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R² and R³ are independently selected from -H, =O, =CH₂, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, O-SO₂-R, CO₂R and COR;

R⁶ and R⁹ are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me₃Sn and halo;

where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C₁₋₁₂ alkyl, C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl and C₅₋₂₀ aryl groups;

R^A is selected from H, R, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me₃Sn and halo;

R¹⁰ is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group;

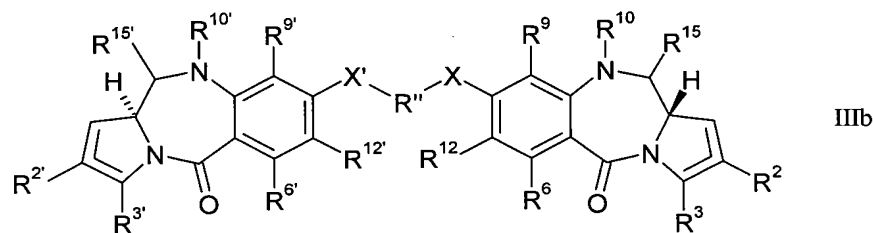
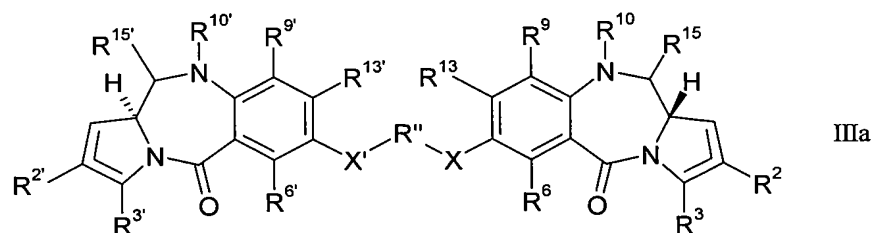
R¹¹ is an oxygen protecting group; and

R¹⁴ is an oxygen protecting group orthogonal to R¹¹.

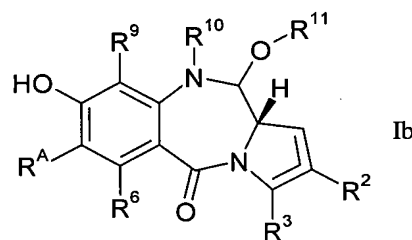
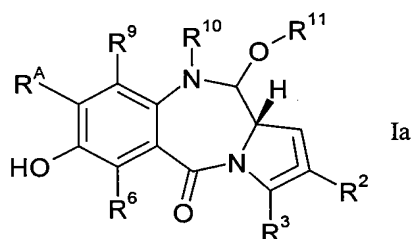
27. (Original) A method according to claim 26, wherein R¹⁴ is benzyl ether and R^A is OMe or H.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~either claim 26 or claim 27~~, wherein R¹¹ is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.

29. (Original) A method of synthesising a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**:



or a solvate thereof, from a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** respectively:



wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R^2 and R^3 are independently selected from $-H$, $=O$, $=CH_2$, $-CN$, $-R$, OR , halo, $=CH-R$, $O-SO_2-R$, CO_2R and COR ;

R^6 , R^9 , R^{12} and R^{13} are independently selected from H , R , OH , OR , SH , SR , NH_2 , NHR , NRR' , nitro, Me_3Sn and halo; where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^A is selected from H , R , OR , SH , SR , NH_2 , NHR , NRR' , nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group and R^{15} is either $O-R^{11}$, wherein R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group, or OH , or R^{10} and R^{15} together form a double bond between N10 and C11; and

where R'' is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, and each X is independently selected from O , S , or NH ; and $R^{2'}$, $R^{3'}$, $R^{6'}$, $R^{9'}$, $R^{10'}$, $R^{12'}$, $R^{13'}$ and $R^{15'}$ are all independently selected from the same lists as previously defined for R^2 , R^3 , R^6 , R^9 , R^{10} , R^{12} , R^{13} and R^{15} respectively.

30. (Original) A method according to claim 29, comprising the step of either:

- (a) reacting a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** with a compound having the formula $Y-R''-Y'$ to yield a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**; or
- (b)
 - (i) reacting a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** with a compound having the formula $Y-R''-YProt$, and
 - (ii) converting $YProt$ in the reaction product from (i) to Y' , and
 - (iii) reacting the product from (ii) with a compound of formula **Ia** or **Ib** to yield a compound of formula **IIIa** or **IIIb**;

wherein:

Y , Y' are independently selected from OH , I , Br , Cl , mesylate or tosylate;

$YProt$ is a precursor to Y' or a chemically protected form of Y' having a protecting group that is orthogonal to R^{10} and R^{11} .

31. (Original) A method according to claim 30, wherein Y and Y' are I.
32. (Original) A method according to claim 30, wherein Y is OH and YProt is O-benzyl.